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The Hazards at Home

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A Playet for Radio

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FS Script-6
1957

THE HAZARDS AT HOME

(A Playlet for Radio)

PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension Service
Lafayette, Indiana

THE HAZARDS AT HOME

Written by: Marilyn Groves and Eleanor Mattauch
Highview Home Demonstration Club
Allen County

This playlet is written for radio presentation. Of course, it might easily be used as a "make-believe" radio program from a stage. It can be adapted for stage or television presentation. Acting time is approximately 12 minutes. Electrical safety is especially emphasized.

List of Characters

Henry Hazard	- an average, young family man
Alice Hazard	- his wife
Jerry Hazard	- their 6-year-old son
Becky Hazard	- their 10-month-old daughter (not a speaking part)
Mr. Hap Hazard	- a sarcastic, troublemaking gremlin who is invisible to the Hazard family
Mr. Bradley	- an electrician

List of Properties Needed for a Radio Broadcast
(introduced in this order)

Dishes and pans
Sound of footsteps on stairs
Sound of chairs scraping
Sound of door slamming
Sound of door opening
Sound of knock on door
Sound of footsteps walking
Fire sirens

THE HAZARDS AT HOME

STATION ANNCR.

Theme: (Up 10 seconds - fade out)

PROGRAM ANNCR. This afternoon we are bringing you a play in the interest of electrical safety in the home. Our story concerns the Hazard family. The cast of characters includes Mr. Henry Hazard; his wife, Alice; and their two children, Jerry, age 6, and Becky, 10 months old. Included also is the gremlin of the family circle, Mr. Hap Hazard, a mean character, who delights in including as many dangerous situations as he can. It is morning as we first meet the Hazards -----

Theme: (up 10 seconds - fade out)

Sound: (Dishes and pans being served)

MOTHER: Breakfast will be ready in about 15 minutes, dear. Hurry and finish your shaving.

FATHER: Would you have time to press that new shirt for me, Alice? I'd like to wear it today.

MOTHER: You would wait until I'm right in the middle of fixing breakfast to tell me! All right, I'll do it.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Just like a man, isn't it? That's it, mother, go ahead and plug the iron where the toaster and coffee maker are and see what happens! That's the way!

FATHER: What happened to the electricity?

MOTHER: I guess a fuse blew out. Go down and fix it, will you? Jerry, come here so I can tie your shoes.

JERRY: Where's Daddy going?

MOTHER: To put a new fuse in the fuse box.

JERRY: Why?

MOTHER: Because one blew out when I plugged in the iron.

JERRY: Why?

MR. HAP HAZARD: Ha! Good question! Because I told her to. She didn't realize that too many appliances in one outlet are too much of a load for any wiring system to handle.

MOTHER: Never mind, Jerry. You go give your baby sister a spoon to play with while I finish putting breakfast on the table.

Sound: (Dishes and pans being served)

FATHER: (Call from basement) Where are the extra fuses?

Sound: (Footsteps going downstairs)

MOTHER: They should be right there on top of the fuse box. Maybe we're out of them.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Use a penny.

FATHER: Well, I can use a penny.

MOTHER: No, you can't. I don't want any fires. Why don't you go next door and borrow a fuse.

FATHER: (Disgustedly) Oh, all right.

Sound: (Footsteps going upstairs)

MR. HAP HAZARD: There go all my happy dreams. Let's see what mischief I can cause upstairs.
(pause) Ah, she left the iron cord dangling just where the baby can reach it.
Come on, Becky, pull on that nice cord.

MOTHER: No, no, Becky. That will hurt you. I guess I got here just in time. You sit here in the high chair where you'll be safe.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Safe? Ha! Look how close she is to the stove. Becky, reach over and grab that nice shiny hot pan before your mother sees it.

MOTHER: Becky! Oh, no! That's full of hot water.

MR. HAP HAZARD: I can't seem to get them into any real trouble this morning. But just wait and I'll have my chance yet.

MOTHER: Breakfast is ready. Come and sit down, Jerry. Here's your father.

Sound: (Chairs scraping - dishes clinking throughout rest of scene)

FATHER: Well, I got the fuse. I wish you would not try to plug all those heating appliances in on one outlet.

MOTHER: I wouldn't do it if I had more outlets in this kitchen.

MR. HAP HAZARD: That's telling him. Ask him to put some more in.

MOTHER: Why don't you install a few more outlets for me, Henry?

FATHER: Oh, no. Not me!

MOTHER: Well, why not? You're always looking for ways to save money.

FATHER: That's a dangerous way to save money. Nobody but a qualified electrician should do it. I'll get in touch with Joe Bradley. I've been wanting an outdoor outlet for the electric mower anyway.

MOTHER: Maybe he can find out why the lights dim when the refrigerator goes on.

JERRY: Could he fix a place in the basement so I could run my electric train down there? Mother won't let me run it in the living room any more because she thinks I almost burned the rug that time I left the transformer on.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Ha, Ha. That was my work. It would have started a good fire if they hadn't found it so soon. I hope this electrician doesn't put me out of a job around here.

FATHER: That's a fine idea, son. Well, I have to be going to work. I'll ask Joe if he can come out this afternoon. Goodbye, dear. Goodbye, kids.

MOTHER, JERRY: Goodbye.

Sound: (Door slams)

Theme: (Up 10 seconds - fades out)

ANNOUNCER: It is now afternoon. Mother has just put the children to bed for their naps.

Sound: (Knock on door - door opening)

MOTHER: Come in, Mr. Bradley.

MR. BRADLEY: Hello, Mrs. Hazard. Your husband said you wanted some electrical work done.

MOTHER: That's right. Come out into the kitchen. I'll show you where I need some new outlets.

Sound: (Footsteps coming in)

MR. HAP HAZARD: So Mr. Fix-it has arrived. I'll have to tag along and see that he doesn't foul up things for me.

Sound: (Footsteps coming in)

MOTHER: I plugged in the toaster and the coffee-maker. When I put the iron plug in the same outlet, the fuse blew.

MR. BRADLEY: No wonder! No outlet can carry that much of a load. You should have a new circuit for this room as well as more wall receptacles. Where would you like them?

MOTHER: I need another one by the stove and one by the refrigerator. By the way, Mr. Bradley, whenever our refrigerator goes on, lights dim all over the house. What causes that?

MR. BRADLEY: That's a sure sign of inadequate wiring. How about me checking all the wiring?

MOTHER: That will be fine.

MR. BRADLEY: We'll start in the basement, then check every room in the house. (Voice fading out)

MR. HAP HAZARD: Here we go!

Theme: (Up 10 seconds - fade out)

ANNOUNCER: It is evening now and Henry Hazard has returned home. He and his wife are discussing the electrician's visit.

FATHER: Alice, what did Mr. Bradley do here today?

MOTHER: That's just it, dear. He didn't actually do anything, except inspect all our wiring. Do you know, Henry, he said our electrical system is the most old-fashioned thing in this house? He said he could not understand why people try to use all of today's modern appliances on wiring that was barely adequate 30 years ago.

FATHER: It sounds like he is trying to make us spend some money. I just wanted to have him put in a couple of outlets. You know we can't afford an extensive rewiring job right now.

MR. HAP HAZARD: You're so right, Henry. Those things do cost money.

MOTHER: That's what I thought at first. But we can afford a fire even less. What he proposed wouldn't cost so much in proportion to the amount of safety it would give us.

FATHER: Well, let's hear it.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Don't listen to her. You'll be sorry -
or maybe I will.

MOTHER: First of all, he says we need two more
circuits in the house. Then he could in-
stall more outlets wherever we want them.
Do you realize there are only two outlets
in the kitchen? In them, I have to plug
the refrigerator, clock, toaster, coffee
maker, iron, radio, waffle iron, fryer,
roaster and mixer. Mr. Bradley says a
kitchen should have one outlet for every
4 feet of usable wall space, plus one for
the sink and one for the refrigerator.

FATHER: I see what you mean. Overloaded wiring
systems decrease the efficiency of appli-
ances too. Heating appliances don't get
as hot as they should. Lights are dim-
mer, too. What did he say about the
other rooms?

MOTHER: Well, the living room could use two more
outlets; one on the west wall where there
isn't any, and one over there where you're
planning to put the television set when
we get one. He saw the extension cord
running under the rug.

MR. HAP HAZARD: My idea, of course.

MOTHER: He showed me why such a thing could easily
start a fire. Walking on or bending
electrical cords can break the insulation.

FATHER: I never considered that. Did you remem-
ber to ask him about a new outlet in the
bathroom for my electric shaver?

MOTHER: Oh, that reminds me! I want to tell you
what almost happened to Jerry and Becky
this afternoon. Jerry was taking his bath
when Becky crept into the bathroom. I had
let Jerry use the portable heater to warm
up the room. Becky started to touch the
heater and Jerry, not wanting her to get
burned, leaned out of the bath tub to grab
the heater away from her. Thank goodness,
I was going past the door and yelled at him
not to touch it while he was in the tub.

MR. HAP HAZARD: You would have to get there just in time.

MOTHER: After I got Becky out of there, I shook for five minutes thinking about what could have happened -- one of our children badly burned or even electrocuted!

FATHER: That settles it! When Mr. Bradley comes to do the work you mentioned, we'll have him install a wall heater with a switch far away from the bath tub. We might as well do things right. Let's see now. What about having him put a line outside for those lamp posts you've always wanted by the driveway? No more stumbling around in the dark. And we need a weather-proof outlet for the patio. Those extension cords running out of the windows can be dangerous.

MOTHER: Wonderful.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Wonderful, she says. He's ruining my life! There won't be any fun left for me around here if they put in all this safety insurance.

MOTHER: There's something else I wanted to tell you, Henry. I got a shock when I started to unplug my washer today. I wish you would take a look at it. It happened after Mr. Bradley left.

FATHER: Yes, let's check it now before I forget about it.

Sound: (Footsteps fading -- then footsteps going downstairs.)

FATHER: I've been planning to put a bigger light bulb in this stairway. This one just puts out enough light to give a person a general idea of where the steps are.

MOTHER: I suppose I had just become accustomed to this dark stairway. I hadn't thought about the safety factor, but now that you mention it, I think more light is a good idea.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Doesn't sound like a good idea to me. If I don't get their minds off this safety theme, I'll soon be listed among the unemployed.

FATHER: Oh! I think I see the trouble here. The insulation is off one of these wires right next to the plug. My, it's a good thing the floor wasn't wet.

MOTHER: Yes, or I might have had one hand in the wash water.

FATHER: That reminds me, I've been going to ground this washer ever since we moved it to this location. Looks like I almost waited too long. I'll do it tonight.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Oh, put it off another day. Give me a chance for a little fun.

MOTHER: I do hope we can get this wiring fixed before someone gets electrocuted.

FATHER: Or, before it causes a fire.

MOTHER: Since water and electricity makes such a dangerous combination, I guess it isn't a good idea to throw water on an electrical fire.

FATHER: Certainly not -- unless it's in the form of a fog or fine spray. Then the electricity can't follow the stream of water and shock the person that's trying to put out the fire.

MOTHER: What is safe to use on a fire of that kind?

FATHER: I believe both dry-chemical and carbon dioxide extinguishers are considered fine for electrical fires. Of course, the best idea would be to turn off the electricity. Then, it won't be an electrical fire any more -- even if the insulation is burning on the wire.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Say, I didn't realize he knew so much about fire extinguishers. I'm not really worried though, because they don't even have one on the place.

MOTHER: There's no doubt about it, we've almost stretched our luck too far. I'm in favor of getting things in order as soon as we can and I think we should have some fire fighting equipment -- just in case.

FATHER: I agree. In fact, I was thinking about that just the other day. I heard a fellow say that people could have a lot of home-made fire protection for very little cost. Having garden hoses hooked up to water faucets was one example I especially remembered. However, he stressed that fire fighting equipment shouldn't be considered as a substitute for correcting fire hazards.

MOTHER: That sounds reasonable, but I imagine there are lots of people in our situation -- they haven't done much about fire prevention or fire protection.

FATHER: Yes, I think we could really use a community for safety program.

MOTHER: Say, that sounds like a good idea.

MR. HAP HAZARD: Wow! A community program -- but they're still just talking. They may never get around to doing anything about it.

FATHER: Let's make a list of some organizations that might be especially interested in cutting down the fire loss in our community.

JERRY: (From top of stairs) Hey, Mom, let's eat.

MOTHER: I guess we can plan while we eat --
if the food hasn't burned by now.

MR. HAP HAZARD: I hope they are all as hungry as Jerry.
If they are, they may drop this com-
munity fire safety program. Gee, a
few leaders like that in every com-
munity could really put me out of busi-
ness. But what am I worrying about?
There are still plenty of us Hazards
around and most people won't pay any
attention to us until fire actually
starts. (Fire engine sounds) There's
another one that waited too long.

Theme: (Up 10 seconds - fading out)

ANNOUNCER: This program has been presented in the
interest of public safety. The cast
of characters has included _____
as Mrs. Hazard, _____ as Mr. Hazard,
and _____ as Jerry. Mr. Bradley
was played by _____, and _____
portrayed Mr. Hap Hazard, the gremlin.
Your announcer has been _____.

Theme: (Until station break)

STATION ANNOUNCER: (Station break)

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
State of Indiana, Purdue University
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H. G. Diesslin, Director, Lafayette, Indiana
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